

13 Colonies Silversmith

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This page describes the work of a colonial silversmith. Did you know that Paul Revere was one of the most successful silversmiths in Boston during the time of the American Revolution?

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Colonial Silversmithing

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Silversmiths were among the most numerous of colonial craftsman. Business could often be difficult as many wealthy citizens imported their silver objects from England. Some silversmiths in America were forced to make their livings by importing silverware from England and selling it. Furthermore, it was very difficult to obtain unfinished silver and colonial silversmiths often had to buy the old silver pieces from citizens just to have silver to work with. Many silversmiths (who also called themselves goldsmiths) made relatively few original items such as spoons, buttons, and shoe buckles. They would also repair items.

Silversmiths fashioned their objects from thick pieces of metal called ingots. Upon an anvil, the ingot would be hammered until it was thin enough. It was then placed over a stake where it was shaped and smoothed. The last step was polishing the piece with pumice, decomposed limestone (known as tripoli) and powdered red iron ore (known as jeweler's rouge).

